

YOUR WEEK IN CHINA'S CAPITAL

今日北京

## BEIJING TODAY

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Subway Sheds 800,000  
Passengers After Price Hike

BY DIAO DIAO

The number of people riding Beijing's subway network has fallen by 800,000 per day in the month since operators raised ticket prices, according to an analysis by the Municipal Traffic Department.

The report found that Line 10 and the Batong Line saw the greatest reduction in traffic flow. Almost every line saw a traffic reduction of between 3 and 18 percent.

Line 10 alone shed some 340,000 passengers, and passengers are also report-

ing that the notoriously congested line has more space during off hours.

Analysis found an obvious reduction in the number of people who take longest and shortest trips.

The number of people travelling more than 72 kilometers fell 13 percent; 52 to 72 kilometers 15.2 percent; less than 6 kilometers 8.8 percent; and less than 4 kilometers 11.5 percent.

However, the department's data showed that traffic fell only 3.9 percent and 8.7 percent during morning and evening rush hours.

Though main lines such as Lines 1 and 10 have fewer passengers, there are still seven others that remain crowded. The north-south running Changping Line had a 38 percent increase in traffic.

The numbers are expected to shift as passengers adapt to the new pricing system. There are 170,000 fewer passengers buying one-way tickets, and as many as 85 percent travel by using a transportation card.

But passengers complain that there are still beggars occupying many of the lines - a problem the increased fares were supposed to solve. ■

## CHINESE STOCK INDEXES

## SSE (Shanghai)

Close	Change	YTD
3,336.46	▲114.02 (3.54%)	+3.15%

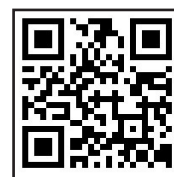
## SZSE (Shenzhen)

Close	Change	YTD
11,483.68	▲245.90 (2.19%)	+4.26%

## HSI (Hong Kong)

Close	Change	YTD
24,350.91	▲238.31 (0.99%)	+3.16%

Accurate to market close on January 15, 2015



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Photo by CFP

# Subway Scammers Profit on Tourists' Tickets

BY LYNNE WANG

Beijing's new subway ticket machines and fee schedule can be overwhelming for out-of-town-ers. With a shortage of staff and authorized volunteers to answer visitors' questions, scammers have found a new opportunity to profit.

In early January, Beijing police received several reports that a group of "assistants" were loitering beside the ticket machines to skim money from the machines' coin return slots while feigning assistance.

"On January 2, I arrived in Beijing

at South Railway Station and went to buy a subway ticket after getting off the train. I didn't know which line I should take, let alone how to use the newest ticket machine," said a woman surnamed Zhang. "As I was hesitated, a young man walked over to me, helped me buy the ticket and gave me the change."

Zhang didn't realize the man was neither a subway worker nor a kind-hearted passerby until she found 1 yuan missing in her change. "When I chased him down and confronted him,

he told me the missing money was his 'tip,'" she said.

Subway workers have reported many similar cases.

"There are always seven or eight men wandering around here and pretending to be kindly people who are happy to instruct tourists in how to use ticket machine," said a nearby subway clerk who refused to be named.

"Back when tickets cost 2 yuan, it was quite common for touts to buy tickets in advance and upsell them to commuters who were unwilling to wait for in the long queue," he said. "Prices have increased, and they've upgraded their tricks to match."

According to a random inquiry by the *Beijing Youth Daily*, fewer than 40 percent of subway passengers could swiftly figure out how to buy tickets through the ticket machine without help.

"Technically, it should take less than 20 seconds to buy a subway ticket including selecting route, stop and the number of tickets prior to inserting the money," wrote by Liu Yang, a reporter for the paper.

"But the reality is that most commuters, especially outsiders, don't know which line their destination is located on and whether they will need to transfer. Sorting that out eats a lot of time," Liu said.

Another reason may be the time limit of the ticket machine.

"The machines only accept 1 yuan coins or 5 yuan and 10 yuan notes. Outsiders don't know this and often spend a lot of time hunting for the right currency denominations. They take so long that the purchase ends up being canceled for going over the time limit and they have to start all over," said a subway volunteer who works at Jintailu Station.

"Also, passengers are worried about buying the wrong tickets and having to pay more money," *Beijing Daily* wrote.

An increase in subway staff and optimization of the machine would help people adapt to the new pricing system, the paper said.

As for the change skimming, Beijing police had arrested one man and "educated" several others as of January 8. ■

# City Puts 18-Meter Trams into Use

BY DIAO DIAO

The city is adding a new kind of 18-meter tram to its fleet of public buses. The longer vehicles are already serving some bus lines near the Yuetan Beijie area in Xicheng district and Pingxifu in Changping district.

The previous longest trams were 16 meters long and used to service routes No. 102, 106, 109 and 118.

The buses have brighter and more modern designs, and are divided into two sections with two doors on each. The windshield is also larger and more bullet-shaped.

The inside seating arrangement is also improved. Many passengers said it's easier and safer to use the middle seat in the last row, which has long been a danger for its lack of a safety rail. Buses have three seats in the rear and allow more space for small luggage.

The final routes for the new buses have yet to be decided. ■



Photo by news.cn

# Censors Crack Down on Popular Series' Cleavage

BY YANG XIN

The world of Chinese soap operas has been riddled with drama and inane political antics for the last several weeks. After being pulled from the air for a four-day "technical hiatus," *The Empress of China* returned in a format that was suspiciously free of breasts.

The show, also known as the *Saga of Wu Zetian*, chronicles the life of China's only female emperor Wu Zetian (624-705) during the Tang Dynasty.

Viewers were unwilling to swallow



Photo by Brother P

Hunan TV's explanation for the obviously aggressive cropping. Industry analysts said it was a punitive punishment for the show's much-discussed flamboyant and revealing costumes that had earned it the online nickname "The Saga of Squeezed Breasts."

The new format left the screen occu-

ried by close-up shots showing only heads of the female characters – even though the seventh-century Tang Dynasty is famous for being an era when a woman's beauty was defined in part by her plump figure.

A survey by industrial research group Zero Power Intelligence found that nearly 40 percent of the show's viewers said the cuts were too prudish, though another quarter of the 13,768 respondents said it helped make the program appropriate for all ages.

For the past few years, the State Administration of Press, Publication, Radio, Film and Television, China's regulating agency, has issued a bizarre series of edicts to shoo-horn all TV programming into a wholesome and family friendly form.

Banned content includes racy costumes, plots that involve one-night stands, wife-swapping, female protagonists falling in love with more than one man and the use of sex in military espionage. More strangely, the authorities have also banned plots that involve time travel "for the sake of preserving historical integrity."

*The Empress of China* is broadcast on Hunan Satellite Television, a provincial television station often seen as one of the major competitors to CCTV, China's state broadcaster. In 2003, the authorities canceled Hunan TV's weather show for having scantily clad presenters. In 2011, they pulled the plug on the hugely popular *Super Girl* talent show, condemning it as "vulgar" and "manipulative."

But a few fans praised the drama's censored form.

"Women in the Tang Dynasty were full-figured, open-minded and fashionable. But the plunging necklines and tightly squeezed bosoms were just for the viewers' titillation," said Zhao Haijun, a resident of Lanzhou, Gansu province.

He added it failed to show the "true" reality of Wu Zetian's period. He also worried the "sexy" drama would have a bad influence on young viewers.

Compared with cropping pictures, it is the lack of innovation in TV drama that is the greater worry, said Tuo Chaoun, a communication teacher at Lanzhou University. ■





# Officials Prepare to Crack Down on 'Special Taxis'

BY DIAO DIAO

**W**ith the proliferation of taxi booking apps, traffic administrators are preparing to crack down on Beijing's favorite transportation service: zhuanche, or "special taxis."

Initially launched in Shenyang, Nanjing and Shanghai, special taxis have become immensely popular in Beijing and other areas where the difficulty of securing a legally licensed cab continues to skyrocket.

The first zhuanche booking apps were created at the end of 2013 and became popular in 2014. Users can specify what kind of car they want to take

and when and where the driver will pick them up.

But according to Liang Jianwei, a spokesman for the Traffic Enforcement Corps, the city aims to stamp out the illegal service before the Spring Festival. Zhuanche booked through apps such as Didi Taxi are among their targets.

Such drivers are not legally licensed to carry passengers for commercial purposes and seriously affect the order of the taxi industry, Liang said.

Such special taxi services can cost between 10 yuan and 30 yuan more than an ordinary taxi, though the apps often

offer coupons.

Liang said many illegal taxi drivers have seized on the zhuanche phenomenon as a chance to feign legality and earn about 800 yuan per day.

"Many unlicensed and illegal taxi drivers get regular business by taking orders through these apps," Liang said, "Apps are not strict in verifying the qualifications of their special taxi drivers, meaning that safety could be a problem."

But many passengers depend on zhuanche for transportation.

Gao Xuedi, a resident of the city's far west side, said there are few legal taxi drivers in his area. The special taxi service is far more convenient for residents.

"Most taxi drivers don't like driving to my area because it is remote and they have to drive back downtown with an empty car," Gao said.

App makers also said their special taxi service is different from common illegal cabs. Each driver is recorded in the system and passengers can check the details of the car and contact the driver at anytime. ■

Photo by CFP



## Chengguan Turn Sprinklers on the Homeless

A chengguan office in Guangzhou has attached sprinklers to the building exterior in hopes of scaring away the 20 or so homeless people who attempt to use it as a shelter.

The sprinklers run for 20 minutes every two hours, hosing down anyone who dares to sleep nearby. A spokesman for the office told Ifeng that the sprinklers were "necessary" in order to "beautify the city."

We can only wonder what would manner of desperation would inspire a homeless person to seek shelter in a chengguan office of all places.

(Ifeng)

## Thieves Tunnel Through Wall to Steal iPhones

Three burglars tunneled through a warehouse wall to steal 240 iPhone 6 handsets worth an estimated 1.4 million yuan in the early hours of December 13.

According to Beijing police, one of the men is a former employee of the warehouse owner who was familiar with the site.

The *Shanghai Daily* reported that the men sold the phones to buy gold bricks and spent the remaining money on gambling.

Police managed to track down the thieves using the iPhones' serial numbers.

(*Shanghai Daily*)

## Child of the Year Drives Drunk Father Home

A seven-year-old son was photographed carting his drunken father home on the back of a flatbed electric tricycle earlier this month.

The picture first appeared on the website of the *Guangxi Daily* on January 7. According to a report on Ifeng, the boy actually left home to go pick up his drunken father before returning with the man in a journey totaling 20 kilometers.

Netizens were concerned that the boy's calm appearance may be a sign that such trips are a regular occurrence.

(Ifeng)

## Plane Passenger Opens Emergency Door, Again

While it may be difficult to understand the physics of aerodynamics, it does not take a degree in advanced math to understand the workings of an airplane's emergency exit.

Nevertheless, this simple concept continues to elude many passengers on Chinese flights.

Stewardesses were shocked when a middle-aged male passenger on a Lhasa-Chongqing flight threw open the door while the plane was taxiing in at Chongqing's airport. Runway workers made an emergency call to the police and the man was detained shortly after landing.

Opening an emergency door during anything other than an actual emergency carries a fine of 100,000 yuan.

(Tencent)

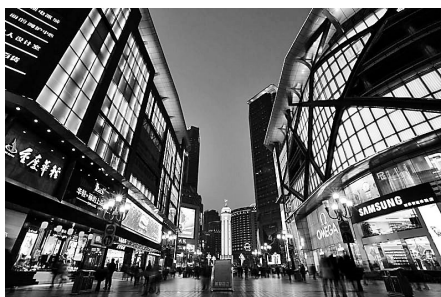


Photo by cqpa.org

# Inland Cities Vie for Free Trade Status

BY LI RUIQI

**W**uhan, Chongqing, Xi'an, Chengdu, Zhengzhou and Lanzhou are competing for the right to open an inland free trade zone in 2015. Of the six, Xi'an and Wuhan submitted blueprint proposals to the State Council this month.

China has opened four free trade zones along its coastline in the past two years. But inland cities have long been excluded from such commercial advantages.

While Donghu district in Wuhan has become a major player in device connectivity and boasts rich geological resources, Binjiang district in Chongqing enjoys a better position at the junction of the Silk Road and Yangtze River economic bands.

Compared to coastal free trade zones, inland cities have a greater advantage in agriculture and mineral industries. Inland free trade zones are expected to foster regional corporation and beat down the longstanding economic imbalances between the country's rich coast

and impoverished interior.

But many say the plan to open too many free trade zones might cause economic fragmentation and trade protection, as has occurred many times in Chinese history.

Opponents counter that improved infrastructure and high-speed rails make central and western China more closely connected than ever before. A decade of urbanization has also created a more fluid population that can respond to the demands of big employment.

"Free trade zones can allow central and western China to gradually catch up with the east coast," said Bai Ming, vice director of International Marketing Research Department of Ministry of Commerce. "We will certainly leave at least one place for registered inland cities in the third batch of free trade zones list, though the outcome remains under discussion." ■





Photo by people.com.cn

# Turnpikes Claim Deficit as Toll Periods Expire

BY LYNNE WANG

**F**or Chinese drivers, it's hard to imagine that the country's notoriously expensive turnpikes are running a 66.1 billion yuan deficit. But those are the facts according to the 2013 Statistical Bulletin on National Turnpikes, the government's first ever disclosure of toll roads finances released last month.

Although turnpikes originated in the US in the 18th century, the first toll road in China did not appear until three decades ago. Opened to traffic in 1984, the Zhangjiamai Jingang Road in Guangdong province was the China's first road that implemented the policy of "building roads by loads, returning loads by tolls."

That policy, crafted by the State Council, was intended to relieve the government's financial burden in constructing a national transportation network. Government agencies and companies could become turnpike administrators provided they could secure a loan from a corporate bank and win a bid. The former could levy tolls until they paid off loan for a maximum term of 15 years, while the latter enjoyed a maximum of 25 years, according to the Administration of Toll Roads.

## Tolls and Debt

The State Council's policy led to an explosion in roadway construction. In 2013, the country's total road mileage

reached 4.3 million kilometers. Chinese expressways also grew from being nonexistent in the 1980s to stretching some 104,400 kilometers in 2013.

Last year, China surpassed the US to become the country with the longest expressway network in the world.

But at the same time, China is also the world's leader in turnpikes. Research by the World Bank in 2007 found that of the world's 140,000 kilometers of turnpikes, some 100,000 kilometers of them are in China.

By the time of the 2007 report, turnpike revenue accounted for 2 percent of China's GDP, passing both the US and Germany.

"For Chinese transportation enterprises, road tolls account for as much as one third of their fixed costs," said Hou Hanping, director of the Logistics Research Institute at Beijing Jiaotong University. "In order to avoid the expensive tolls, truck overloading has become increasingly common. If the average firm adds in the related fines, transportation alone can account for 50 percent of their total cost of operation costs."

But even buoyed by tolls, China's turnpikes have tumbled into a debt crisis according to the Ministry of Transportation. Their deficit has exploded in the last three years, from 32.3 billion yuan in 2011 to 66.1 billion yuan in 2013.

"It is quite hard to understand why Chinese turnpikes have such a great deficit, especially since local media previously called them the most profitable industry," said Wang Yang, a reporter at NetEase.

## Tolls for Debt or Profit?

Heavy debts to corporate banks and increasing construction costs are two explanations according to officials.

"Most road tolls are used to pay back the banks, and the percentage of repayment occupies 86.2 percent of the turnpikes' revenue. Other expenditures include maintenance, taxes, operating costs and so forth," the *People Daily* said in an editorial.

"From this point, Chinese turnpikes could be regarded as 'super wage earners' for banks," the paper said.

The cost of constructing Chinese roads has also surged, especially with the development of road networks in mountainous western interior areas, said Wang. According to statistics from the Ministry of Transportation, the cost of expressway construction was 50.67 million yuan per kilometer in 2011, but just two years later, it surged to 90.82 million yuan.

"Indeed, the interest rate is as high as 6 to 10 percent, and the increase in construction costs has further burdened the turnpikes. But without detailed accounts, these explanations

don't explain how and where the revenue went," said an insider who refused to be named.

Stories of revenue theft are unfortunately common in turnpike-related news. According to a report by the Audit Commission in 2013, massive amounts of turnpike revenue were being funneled into real estate projects or invested in stocks and staff pensions. A dispute between the local government and bidders over management of the Hechaohu Expressway caused a further 1.24 billion yuan loss of national assets.

With the end of the toll years fast approaching, administrators are now trying every means possible to extend the toll period and repay their debts – if not profit.

On November 30, the Shandong government announced its plan to extend the toll period on 15 turnpikes to "pay back debts." "The toll period is about to expire, but our province's turnpikes are still 13.88 billion yuan in the red. The tight budget leaves us with no other choice," said a spokesman for the Shandong provincial government.

But even the country's most profitable turnpikes are finding ways to continue collecting their tolls.

Thanks to its geographic position and traffic flow, the Jingshi Expressway was quick to pay off its debts in 2000. In order to squeeze more money out of commuters, the local government reassigned the road's ownership to a corporate firm that could collect tolls for a longer period. By 2004, the express had already turned a profit of 585 million yuan on its Beijing section alone.

Drivers recently celebrated the end of the tolls on November 22. However, the free period only lasted 40 days before the government opted to destroy the Jingshi Expressway and build a new one at the same site so that it could begin collecting again.

"Fixed periods are a bad way to regulate road tolls," said Hu Fangjun, a deputy director of the Transportation Finance Institute under the Ministry of Transportation. "Roads develop at significantly different speeds thanks to factors such as economy, population density and traffic flow."

Japan also relied on social debt to develop its national transportation at an earlier stage. Although the efficiency of the repayment was initially low, the government fused six independent turnpike operators into one licensed organization to deal with all of the debts of national turnpikes. Instead of profiting on specific roads, it had to profit from billboards, service areas and information services.

The approach allowed the Japanese government to repay 17 percent of its debt in only six years.

"On the surface, it appears that most of the road tolls ended up in the pockets of the banks. What happened after that is anyone's guess, as is what financial plan if any the turnpike operators had for this revenue," said Wang Yijun, a reporter for *China Youth Daily*.

"It will take more detailed laws and a third-party national auditing organization to resolve the mess of toll roads in China," Wang said. ■



# Hunan TV Reclaims Content from Streaming Competitors

BY LYNNE WANG

**T**he January 2 broadcast debut of *I'm a Singer III*, the latest installment in China's favorite reality show series, has helped Hunan TV and its mobile app Mango TV to grab headlines.

But it is not the idols that are getting attention: it is the fact that the program has helped Mango TV rise to the top of the free app list on the Apple App Store.

According to statistics from Hunan TV, the first episode of *I'm a Singer III* was viewed more than 50 million times on its Mango TV client: fans have increasingly downloaded the app because it was the only way to catch clips if they missed a live broadcast.

The boom in Mango TV shows Hunan TV's new broadcast strategy may be bearing fruit.

## Beyond Content Creation

Last May, Hunan TV announced it would cease to license its programs – including popular original drama series and reality shows – to streaming media sites such as Youku, Tudou and IQiyi.

"From now on, we will exclusively own our programs and cease to license their intellectual property. The only online broadcast channel will be Mango TV," said Lü Huanbin, the president of the TV station.

Prior to the announcement, Hunan TV collaborated with video sites like most of its counterparts

– by distributing programs to the latter and making profits on high-priced royalties.

Quality video resources have made Hunan TV a lot of money over the past two years.

At the end of 2013, LeTV.com bought the online broadcasting rights to *I'm a Singer II* at the price of 100 million yuan. The following year, Hunan TV station sold the broadcasting rights of five self-produced shows including *Dad, Where Are We II*, *Happy Camp* and *Day Day Up* to IQiyi at the price of 200 million yuan.

But royalty revenue has become increasingly less attractive for the Hunan TV station according to Yu De, an independent business observer.

"The various advertising revenue that video sites enjoy is even more appealing. For *Dad, Where Are We Going II*, IQiyi made a profit of 66 million yuan for the program's online ads, not including the embedded ads and pre-rolls, which means nearly a third of its investment on royalties could be recovered," Yu said.

From the perspective of Hunan TV station's long-term strategy, earning quick money at the price of the loss of users is the last thing they want to do.

Instead of being a pure content provider, Hunan TV wants to control its top programs and lock viewers into its own online platform, according to the station's executive board.

"If we always focus on the distri-

bution of copyrights, it will turn out that the money we earn will only pay for our own coffin," said Zhang Ruobo, CEO of Happy Sunshine, the wholly owned subsidiary of Hunan TV station that developed Mango TV.

"In an earlier stage of the Internet era, newspapers contributed their best content to portal sites with little return. But instead of surviving, they dug their own graves. Similar to how portals ruined the news industry, video sites will ultimately dissolve TV stations if we don't fight back," Zhang said.

By bypassing video sites and creating its own broadcasting platform, Hunan TV can test the actual value of its video content. But whether Hunan TV can thrive in a competitive environment and – more importantly – be a role model for other traditional TV stations, still needs to be discussed.

## Strike Back or Die

With the shift of eyeballs toward digital media, traditional TV stations must embrace the Internet and develop their own online channels.

But in most cases, they fail due to weak Internet experience and a limited technical background – the same obstacles that Mango TV faces according to industry insiders.

"For players in the current online video arena, they have spent four years to construct a content delivery network and have invested heavily to

optimize user experience. It will be difficult for Hunan TV to catch up," said Li Tuo, a technology reporter for *Huxiu Daily*.

In fact, technology problems have troubled Mango TV since its debut. Developed in 2013, the app has been constantly condemned for its awkward interface and bugs. Users once rated an earlier version as low as 1.5 stars and labeled it "the download they most regretted."

Being locked into its own world may also keep Mango TV from developing as quickly as it could. "Keeping a distance from former video partners means it has given up the existing promotion channels for its programs," said Yang Yang, a journalist at Ifeng.

"Also, relying on self-produced content can't sustain the users' loyalty to Mango TV. It will be quite easy for users to change to other platforms that offer content from more sources," Yang said.

While most online video competition has focused on possessing content, creating channel is also important – especially with the industry still losing money four years into its development, *Beijing News* wrote in an editorial.

"In the Internet era, there is no difference between TV stations and video sites, and how to extend the industry chain and find ways to profit is something all the players have to think about," it said. ■



Photos by mmhiz.qpic.cn





While expected to be the forefront of China's sex ed, elementary schools seem reluctant to shoulder the responsibility.

Photos by CFP

# Sex Ed Still a Blank Space After 50 Years

BY YANG XIN

A string of sexual abuse cases in 2014 made it clear that China's sex education is still lacking. But in spite of the facts, sex ed is a school topic that both administrators and bashful parents remain loath to tackle.

Jin Wei, a professor at the Party School of the CPC Central Committee, said she was shocked when her daughter, a middle school student, asked whether shaking hands with, hugging or kissing an AIDS patient could infect her with HIV.

"Even in Zhonguancun District – the heart of China's most advanced technological and education resources – schools taught nothing at all about sex," Jin said. "Even worse, the basic health knowledge they taught was flat-out wrong."

## Tumbling Sex Ed

Former Premier Zhou Enlai is largely responsible for setting the tone of China's sexual education in 1963. But even his modest plans did not see any implementation until the 1980s.

In 1988, the State Education Committee united with the Ministry of Health and the State Family Planning Commission to introduce sex ed to Chinese middle schools. In 1992, the government gave it

a legal basis by writing it into the Law on the Protection of Minors. The State Council's Development Program of Chinese Children's Development (2011-2020) took it a step further by requiring sex ed to be included in the nine-year compulsory education system.

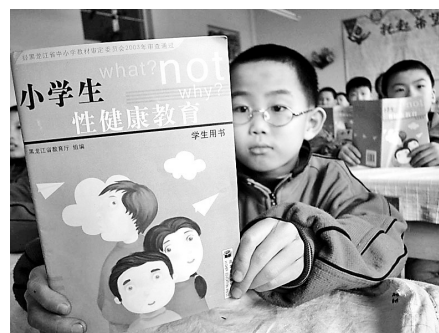
But in spite of official requirement, sex ed shortcomings remain ubiquitous.

Early puberty has become a common phenomenon in Chinese society, and statistics reveal that most Chinese adolescents reach sexual maturity between the ages of 12 or 13 – during their final years of elementary school and long before sex ed ever becomes a topic.

Simplistic teachings are another hurdle. "China's sex education focuses too much on physical health courses while avoiding an explanation of sexual morality, perception and culture, which are important in building children's understandings of love and the world," said Xu Zhenlei, secretary-general of the China Sexology Association.

Another barrier is the insufficient teaching staff and poor teaching method.

Sa Zhihong, a professor of social development and public policy at Beijing Normal University, said most teachers placed in charge of sex ed have a dual identity. It's not only anatomy teachers and school doctors teaching sex ed, but



those teaching language, politics and athletics.

Documents from the Ministry of Education showed that there were more than 320,000 middle schools in 2011. Even having only two sex ed teachers per school would mean a need for 640,000 professionals. China does not train anywhere near that many.

Teachers who are assigned to handle sex ed are often at a loss for what to teach and how.

"Adolescent sex ed relies on support from the school leadership to a large extent. If the leaders treat it as nonsense, then no one's effort can make it otherwise," said Yu Chengmou, the school doctor at Beijing No. 11 Middle School.

Wang Xiying, a professor at Beijing Normal University, said policies related to implementing sex ed are mere formalities in most regions. An editorial in *China Youth Daily* said most experts blame that on the government for passing policies written in vague language.

Although the nation is making some efforts to promote sex ed, parents must also play a crucial role in the process.

But things are even less optimistic on that front: the majority of Chinese parents never speak about sex with their children.

A 14-year-old student Zheng Xiaoling conducted a survey of seven Shenzhen-based middle schools and found that most parents regard sex as a forbidden topic. More than 71.6 percent of the parents never provided any knowledge about sex to their children. When asked about sex issues, only 18.6 percent of parents gave a patient answer.

Traditional concepts about sex remain an invisible but firm barrier to sex ed in China.

"People conflate sex with eroticism. This kind of perception comes from conservative trends that have been prevalent in China for several hundred years, and which effectively put the brakes on sex ed," said Hu Ping, an expert on Chinese adolescents' sex and health education.

Four years ago, several sex educators compiled a series of textbooks for schools to use. Many parents protested that the books were "too explicit for children's eyes."

"Sex ed in China is a mission of endless struggle. We are dogged by moralistic, anti-sex concepts and uncooperative parents," said Li Yinhe, a researcher at the Chinese Academy of Social Sciences.

## Lessons from Abroad

Research both within China and abroad shows that the best time to begin sexual education is before a child is 10 years old.

The UK, France and Holland have strict education outlines requiring children to begin receiving basic sex ed from kindergarten. British law requires children over the age of five to receive compulsory sex education. In Russia, sex ed begins at the age of seven.

In the US, sex ed is a part of basic education, and schools set up courses for students starting from first grade.

Even China's Asian neighbors are putting in better efforts.

Since 2001, South Korea has been requiring sex ed courses in elementary, middle and high school. The government requires every student to attend a minimum of 10 such classes each year. To educate younger students, Korea's national publishing system released a series of fairytale books designed to illustrate basic sex ed.

Japan, a country recognized as being as conservative as China – at least in public – has Asia's most advanced sex ed system. Sex ed courses run through the entire six-year elementary school period with content adjusted depending on what the students can grasp.

Bathing with children is another way for Japanese parents to help their children to learn basic sexual knowledge. The old tradition allegedly works even better than school education.

## Preserving Ignorance

But many fear that conservative Chinese society, once exposed to an atmosphere of open sexual education, will devolve into a cesspool of sin.

"Without natural bashfulness when faced with sexual issues, there may be even more middle school students having sex," said Xu Zhenlei, secretary-general of the China Sexology Association.

"Bashfulness is a deep-rooted reaction when Chinese people are faced with sex. If we just imitate Western sex education indiscriminately, this kind of emotional reaction will disappear," he said. ■





Zhang Yanping meets with Alberto Alvarino Atienza.

# Sino-Cuban Ties Strengthened in Industry Talk

BY YANG XIN

**A**lberto Alvarino Atienza, deputy head of the Propaganda Department of the Central Committee of the Communist Party of Cuba, led a Cuban diplomatic delegation to visit Beijing and explore developments in China's publishing industry on January 8.

The delegation included Carlos Alberto Moreno, general director of the Cuban Newspaper Company, Jorge

Gastón Olivares, vice general director of Federico Engel Company, Luis Martínez-Casado, technical director of the Cuban Newspaper Group, and representatives from the Cuban Embassy.

The delegation visited Beijing Youth Daily Group, publisher of the capital's flagship newspaper *Beijing Youth Daily* and nine other newspapers including the popular *Legal Evening News* and *First*

*Financial Daily*.

Li Xiaobing, vice president of Beijing Youth Daily Group, welcomed the delegation and gave a brief presentation about the history of *Beijing Youth Daily*, the city's most widely circulated metropolitan newspaper.

Li led the visitors to the group's typesetting room, where they were able to learn more about the process of laying out and creating Chinese publications.

For the delegation, the trip was a chance to learn about China's prevailing printing hardware systems. "Cuba is still far behind world average in terms of printing technologies. The equipment we use today was left to us by former Soviet Union technicians. That's why we spared no effort to make this trip," Atienza said.

Atienza said Cuban printing technology only supports black and blue ink. It's

also quite inefficient.

"As one of Cuba's most influential newspapers, *Cuba Youth Daily* has never been able to produce enough to meet demand. We look forward to drawing from the experience of our excellent friends," he said.

Zhang Yanping, president of Beijing Youth Daily Group, assigned the group's head of print to meet with the delegation and discuss further bilateral exchange.

During the exchange, Zhang Yanping emphasized the common history and fraternal ties between the peoples of Cuba and China, and the need to find new fronts for joint cooperation.

The dialogue ended with a settlement that the delegation will be given a chance to visit one of the group's largest printing houses to see the practical application of *Beijing Youth Daily's* printing technology. ■



Li Xiaobing in guidance of the delegation



Photos by Beijing Today

# Anniversary Celebrations Bring Sino-Danish Relations to a New Level



Entrance of the Danish Legation in 1912



Alex Morch met with Mao Zedong in 1950.

BY YANG XIN

**O**n January 9, 1950, Premier and Foreign Minister Zhou Enlai received a telegram from the Danish Foreign Minister Gustav Rasmussen informing him that Denmark would recognize the People's Republic of China. The two countries formally established diplomatic ties on May 11, 1950.

Throughout the 1950s and 1960s, Denmark supported the People's Republic of China to assume the Chinese seat in the UN. It eventually did in 1971, and at the same time the Republic of China's UN membership came to an end.

"We have come a long way since, building a comprehensive strategic partnership between our two countries," said Martin Lidegaard, the incumbent foreign minister in Denmark.

Martin Lidegaard expressed his good wishes for the future of Sino-Danish relations by recording a short video and sharing it with Chinese netizens on Weibo. "In Denmark, we look forward to celebrating the 65th anniversary of diplomatic relations between China and Denmark, enlarging our cooperation and taking our relations to a new stage," he said in the video.

According to the Embassy of Denmark in Beijing, 2015 will see several events unfold in both countries to commemorate the ties established 65 years ago.

"We have many exciting events coming up this spring, including many more cultural gatherings from the Danish Cultural Season, where an authentic Danish Viking



Photos by the Royal Danish Embassy in Beijing

ship will be placed on exhibition in Suzhou, Jiangsu province," said Friis Arne Petersen, the Danish ambassador to China.

"Today the relationship between Denmark and China is at an all-time high. Politically, economically and culturally we see an incremental growth in both depth and width of the bilateral bonds," Petersen said.

In 2014, there were a record number of Danish official visits to China and vice versa. One of the most prominent visits was a State Visit by Danish Queen Margrethe II on the invitation of President Xi Jinping.

The deepened ties between China and

Denmark were exemplified on many occasions during the visit, not least when Margrethe II and First Lady Peng Liyuan read H. C. Andersen's fairy tales to Chinese children. The Queen also visited the Museum of Victims of the Nanjing Massacre by Japanese Invaders.

Denmark is the only Western country that has had an unbroken diplomatic presence in China since 1908.

In 1912, Denmark established its own mission in China headed by Count Preben Ahlefeldt-Laurvig, making China the first Asian country to host a Danish Embassy. ■



# Re-Designing China's Wedding Costume

As the new year begins, NE•TIGER is preparing a visual feast of Chinese wedding dress designs that might inspire couples to more closely examine the cultural traditions they represent. The show will be on display through March 22 at Mt. Foguang, Kaohsiung, Taiwan.

As described in the *Book of Rites*, "The marriage ceremony is the origin of rites." NE•TIGER's Beauty of Wedding show takes "Yuan Xian" as its theme to indicate "a couple with a predestined relationship is connected across the distance by an invisible thread."

The pronunciation of Yuan Xian stands for Yuan Rong, where Yuan means roundness and Rong means combination and integration. The Buddhist term Yuan Rong means consummation and integration with tolerance. Marriage is a predestined relationship determined by a red thread.

In NE•TIGER's show, many thin threads hang and cross each other to resemble a river with shining waves. For viewers, it's like tumbling into a river of love across time and space. The show is divided into five parts: "Hundred-bird Dress," "Annunciation of Happiness from Luan and Feng (Husband & Wife)," "Prosperity of Dragon & Phoenix," "More Children, More Happiness" and "Flowered Dress for Greeting." The long history of Chinese civilization gives NE•TIGER infinite ideas for creation.

NE•TIGER's haute couture wedding dresses follow a design concept of "connecting ancient and modern times, and integrating both Chinese and Western elements." Many draw inspiration from the *Book of Zhou Rites*, the *Book of Etiquette and Rites* and the *Book of Rites*.



Photo Provided by NE•TIGER

NE•TIGER's designs blend concepts from the Zhou, Tang and Ming Dynasty to create a truly classic dress. In seeking the origin of Chinese wedding dress colors, the designers have replaced plain black and crimson with Chinese red. Purple and blue dresses serve as supplements representing auspicious signs and good luck. In terms of technique, they use royal weaving crafts such as Kesi (Chinese silk tapestry), brocade, embroidery and gold embroidery. These are combined with the fashionable 3D cutting techniques of Western design to skillfully show the beauty of Huafu, Chinese national dress.

"Couples are the origin of everything and the basis of human relations. Chinese wedding culture has a long history. The wedding dress not only serves as the sign of love, but also represents parents' encouragement and blessing for their children. It should be passed down to future generations as a treasure to enable the love to survive forever," said Zhang Zhifeng, founder and artistic director of NE•TIGER. ■

(BY LI RUIQI)



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